

# ***IOWAccess Project 9***

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## STAWRS

### Mission

Project 9 was approved as a pilot program by the National STAWRS office. The team's purpose was to develop and test a system that will give Iowa employers the option of filing an electronic, combined wage tax report to a single state agency which will then electronically forward the return data to the other agencies. This will save employers the need to file separate paper returns to each of the three agencies.

The prototype is one of several tests being conducted by the IRS to determine viable single-point filing national options for the future, and is a priority for them.



### List of Members

Renny Dohse, Iowa Workforce Development, Co-Chair  
Wayne Cooper, Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance, Co-Chair  
Darrell Bauman, Dallas County Treasurer  
Harold Bowman, Iowa Communications Network  
Richard Columbo, Technical Director, National STAWRS Office  
Wayne Cooper, Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance  
Rita Cox, Iowa Workforce Development  
Paulette Day, Iowa Workforce Development  
Renny Dohse, Iowa Workforce Development  
Tim Erwin, Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance  
Roger Hains, John Deere and Company  
Kurt Herbrechtsmeyer, First Security Bank, Charles City  
Donna Hockensmith, Project Manager, National STAWRS Office  
Conrad Lawlor, Small Business Administration  
Darla Long, IPERS  
Laura Messerley, Ameristar Casino  
Jan Moen, Iowa Workforce Development  
Bob Rassmussen, Fairfield City Administrator

Deana Thompson, Iowa Workforce Development  
Nancy Vasey, Maxwell City Clerk  
Larry Venenga, Iowa Workforce Development

## Staff

Ruth Sparks Melone, State Public Policy Group  
Joe Shannahan, State Public Policy Group

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## ***Section 1 ■ Approach***

### **Project Goal**

Project 9 is a pilot program for the National STAWRS (Simplified Tax and Wage Reporting System) Office.

The goal was to develop and test a system that would allow employers to file a single combined report electronically to one state agency which would then electronically forward return information to the other agencies. It was a combined effort by Iowa Workforce Development, the Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance, the IRS STAWRS office, private sector employers, and practitioners.

### **Employer Benefits**

- No need to file three separate paper returns.
- Elimination of redundant reporting.
- Immediate acknowledgment that the return was received.
- Elimination of errors by use of provided software.

### **Government Benefits**

- Elimination of data entry of paper filed returns by all three agencies.
- Faster access to information.
- Elimination of errors will expedite processing.
- Expedited processing will allow better service in providing information to customers.

### **Returns Selected for the Project**

- The federal 941 quarterly return submitted to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- The UI quarterly return submitted to Iowa Workforce Development (IWD)
- The annual state withholding reconciliation form (VSP) submitted to the Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance. (IDR&F)

The new combined form will be submitted electronically to IWD which will forward return data electronically to the other two agencies and move the UI data to the IWD mainframe.

### **Focus Group and Survey**

Because the project was selected without a documented need, the team decided employer input was needed before proceeding.

A focus group of employers was held September 30, 1997, to review the project plan and proposed combined form. In addition, 500 employers were surveyed by mail regarding interest to report wage tax information electronically. Both the survey and focus group showed that

employers were interested in the combined electronic filing. The results of the IOWAccess surveys were also shared with our federal partners and will be incorporated into the evaluation process.

It became clear that Iowa's large employers have a special need to pursue national uniformity in order to reduce their reporting burden. Although this need is outside the scope of the project, their need has been advanced with groups pursuing that goal.

As a result of the employee input, the team concluded that the project will fulfill a need that employers and agencies involved in wage tax reporting have for easy access to wage tax information, a reduction in redundant reporting and an ability to send reports to state and federal agencies by electronic means. It will also provide an important service to the three government agencies by eliminating data entry and error resolution functions, expediting processing and making the return information available faster than when paper returns are filed.

## Accomplishments

1. Meetings were held to determine the process reengineering needed to begin accepting electronic filing by the three agencies. Iowa Workforce Development, the Iowa Department of Revenue and Finance, and the IRS STAWRS office were the cooperating agencies because they each receive employer wage and tax reports. Other agencies and reports may be added in the future.
2. A vendor was selected to modify software they had developed for other STAWRS projects and adapt it to allow Iowa employers to file electronically to IWD, and for IWD to return acknowledgments and error messages when necessary. A separate contract was negotiated to have them develop the software needed for IWD to forward data to the other two agencies and to move UI data to the IWD mainframe.
3. A combined paper return was also developed in cooperation with the National STAWRS office and the IRS. This parallel project was pursued because not all employers will be ready to file electronically at the same time. The team decided to use the same electronic software for data input of the paper filed returns during the testing phase. The federal legislation needed in order for work to continue on the combined paper effort was not obtained, so it is no longer being considered as an option. Should legislation be passed in the future, allowing for a combined paper return, data entry software to process these would need to be developed.
4. The team solicited employer volunteers to participate in testing of the software as it was being developed. Separate groups of six employers filed return data with us for the 4th quarter, 1997, first quarter 1998, and the 2nd quarter 1998 data after final

signoff of the software was completed. Half of the employers filed combined paper and half electronically. Their input was used after each test to further refine the software and forms to better meet their needs. Testing of the revised software was conducted in November of 1998.

5. Live testing of the electronic option has been approved by the IRS for 1st quarter 1999, and continuing for an additional two quarters. During these periods, an expanded group of employers will be allowed to file actual returns electronically without the need to file any paper returns. This will allow the IRS to test their processes and allow the team to verify that security features are adequate. We expect 25-200 employers to participate in this phase of the project.
6. Deployment of the needed software to employers is a concern for the team. Three options have been identified. Government agencies could provide the software to each participating employer, employers could purchase it from private sector vendors, or an internet alternative could be developed. The team will distribute software for the 1999 testing, while developing the internet option. The National STAWRS office is coordinating discussion with software developers. Final decisions on the deployment option will be made late in 1999.
7. The team used this approach because employer participation and buy-in was imperative. This was done because our federal partners brought their own criteria to the table and because everyone placed a high value on development of a final product that will become a national milestone. The progress made over this year has received high marks from various constituent groups across the country who applaud the decision to continue this effort as a national priority.
8. The Mission Statement for the phase of our project was completed.

## ***Section 2 ■ Cost/Benefit Analysis***

### **Project Time Frame**

Planning on the project began in July, 1997. This phase included development of the project description, analysis of processes, and obtaining employer input.

Implementation began in January of 1998 with the first testing of software and will continue until approvals are obtained to offer the option state-wide.

Evaluation began in April of 1998 with feedback from employers participating in the testing and will continue throughout the project.

### **Project Expenditures**

Hardware:	\$111,000
Software:	\$ 30,000
Consultants:	\$ 47,000
Misc.:	\$ 1,000
Total:	\$189,000

### **Ongoing Costs**

Ongoing costs will be absorbed as departmental operating costs. If the federal partner (IRS) does not participate after the final evaluation is completed, funding will be necessary for state-only software development. It is estimated this will cost \$50,000 - \$100,000.

### **Cost Benefit**

See the employer and government benefits section for a preview of why cost benefits will occur. The cost benefit portion of the project will be included in the final evaluation report by our federal contractor (VRI) during the next phase of the project. The format for the evaluation phase is outlined in the next section.



## ***Section 3 ■ Evaluation***

Evaluation of the project will be completed on two levels. The following Project 9 evaluation will wrap up the year long IOWAccess phase. A second evaluation will be conducted by the National STAWRS office to evaluate the overall project and whether the IRS will pursue the Iowa pilot or one of the other options for National deployment.

### **Project 9 Evaluation**

Although the project will continue for some time, the goals of the year long IOWAccess phase have been met.

During this year we

1. Evaluated current processes, agreed on forms that could be filed electronically in a single point transmission and developed a prototype combined return.
2. Conducted an employer focus group and survey to verify that the project would result in a benefit to Iowa employers.
3. Contracted for the development of software to test the concept with a small group of employers.
4. Completed three tests with this group as the software was being developed to obtain their feedback and determine any problems before live transmissions are attempted.
5. Purchased and installed hardware and software in order to complete testing.
6. Worked with Vector Research to begin the evaluation process of the Iowa project for the National STAWRS office.
7. Determined options for state-wide deployment and began discussions on how an internet application could be tested with state data over the next year in order to expedite use of that option if it proves to be secure and if the federal partners are able to pursue that option.
8. Identified re-engineering needed at IWD in order to implement the program state-wide.
9. Identified sustainability options
10. Came in under budget.

## Survey of Pilot Participants

Because the overall evaluation by the federal contractor will not be completed until 1999, the team conducted a telephone survey of the employers who assisted in pilot transmissions. Following are the results of that survey, however, the main theme of their responses was to continue our efforts to provide the one-stop electronic service.

## Survey of Combined Electronic Filing Participants

Twelve of the 14 questions in the survey instrument of employers participating of combined electronic reporting was scored in three categories: 1) Completely Satisfied, 2) Satisfied, and 3) Not at all Satisfied. The final two are closed-ended "yes" or "no" questions. All questions and responses were as follows:

1. How satisfied were you with the convenience of electronic, combined wage tax report to a single state agency? Five out of seven were either completely satisfied or satisfied.
2. How satisfied were you that contact with State of Iowa personnel treated you in a courteous, fair, and professional manner when answering questions? Five out of seven were completely satisfied.
3. How satisfied were you that contact with Federal personnel treated you in a courteous, fair, and professional manner when answering questions? Two out of three were either completely satisfied or satisfied.
4. How satisfied were you that contact with software personnel treated you in a courteous, fair, and professional manner when answering questions? Five out of seven were either completely satisfied or satisfied.
5. How satisfied were you that your contacts thoroughly explained the electronic reporting process and software being used? Five out of six were completely satisfied or satisfied.
6. How satisfied are you that your combined wage tax reports were sent to the various agencies in a secure fashion? Two out of three were satisfied.
7. How satisfied are you with your business PC's ability to handle the software? Five out of six were completely satisfied or satisfied.
8. How satisfied are you with the help and ease of loading the software on a PC? Five out of six were completely satisfied or satisfied.
9. How satisfied are you with Tax Software performance in calculating your taxes? Five out

of six were completely satisfied or satisfied.

10. How satisfied are you with the software being user friendly? Five out of six were completely satisfied or satisfied.
11. How satisfied were you with the time it took to complete electronic reporting? Five out of six were completely satisfied or satisfied.
12. How satisfied are you with the ease of getting your wage taxes reported? Five out of six were completely satisfied or satisfied.
13. Based on this project, and your participation, would you continue the electronic, combined wage tax reporting? Four out of five replied with yes.
14. Based on this project, and your participation, would you recommend the electronic, combined wage tax reporting? Four out of five replied with yes.

The final request of this survey solicits any further observations for commenting or recommendation. These were:

- "like acknowledgements,"
- "did not receive software or contact to do testing,"
- "great to do,"
- "good only if employers can download employee data instead of re-keying it,"
- "was pleased but thought software could be better," and
- "software poorly written, not friendly, screens would not save, screens would go blank, employer felt state got taken by software vender, nobody called back to answer questions, very unhappy with process, questions why access was used to program software."

## Survey of Combined Paper Participants

Nine of the 12 questions in the survey instrument of employers participating in combined paper reporting was scored in three categories: 1) Completely Satisfied, 2) Satisfied, and 3) Not at all Satisfied. The final three are closed-ended "yes" or "no" questions. All questions and responses were as follows:

1. How satisfied were you with the convenience of hardcopy, combined wage tax report to a single state agency? Four out of five were either completely satisfied or satisfied.
2. How satisfied were you that contact with State of Iowa personnel treated you in a courteous, fair, and professional manner when answering questions? Five out of five were completely satisfied.

3. How satisfied were you that contact with Federal personnel treated you in a courteous, fair, and professional manner when answering questions? Three out of five were either completely satisfied or satisfied.
4. How satisfied were you that your contacts thoroughly explained the hardcopy procedures? Four out of five were completely satisfied or satisfied.
5. How satisfied are you that your combined wage tax reports were sent to the various agencies in a secure fashion? Three out of five were completely satisfied or satisfied.
6. How satisfied are you with the appearance of the form? Five out of five were completely satisfied or satisfied.
7. How satisfied are you with the form's easy readability? Three out of five were completely satisfied or satisfied.
8. How satisfied are you with the time it took to complete the combined form? Four out of five were completely satisfied or satisfied.
9. How satisfied are you with the ease of getting your wage taxes reported? Four out of five were completely satisfied or satisfied.
10. Based on this project, and your participation, would you continue the hardcopy combined wage tax reporting? One out of three replied with yes.
11. Based on this project, and your participation, would you recommend the hardcopy combined wage tax reporting? Two out of four replied with yes.
12. Based on this project, and your participation, would you recommend that we concentrate on electronic reporting? Four out of Five replied with yes.

The final request of this survey solicits any further observations for commenting or recommendation. These were:

- "only tested for one quarter,"
- "willing to do electronic filing,"
- "need to allow practitioners to file for clients,"
- "not ready for electronic filing yet - no internet access," and
- "print could be larger on combined forms."

## National STAWRS Evaluation

Vector Research, Incorporated of Annandale, Virginia has been hired by the National STAWRS office as the contractor to complete the evaluation of all the pilots being pursued.

Team members have been supplying them with documentation throughout the project, and participated in a two day public-private sector work session held in Las Vegas during July. The consensus of that meeting was that the Iowa project should remain a priority.

The following identify the evaluation strategy for the Vector evaluation process.

### *DRAFT*

#### 1 - Introduction

In 1995, the Simplified Tax and Wage Reporting System (STAWRS) Program Office selected three initiatives designed to reduce the tax and wage reporting burden on employers. Those initiatives are streamlined customer service, single point filing, and simplified requirements. The Iowa electronic/paper filing employers' quarterly returns project directly supports the single point filing initiative. The project began upon recognition that employers are unnecessarily burdened by the requirement to file redundant tax and wage information with various agencies (Federal and state) on multiple forms (paper or nonpaper).

STAWRS marketing and partnering efforts resulted in the development of a productive working relationship with Iowa. The first STAWRS/Iowa working session took place in June of 1997. At this meeting, the partners determined that they could best serve the employer community by combining Iowa's quarterly unemployment insurance reporting form with Form 941, Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return, and the Iowa annual withholding tax return. In addition, it was determined both paper and electronic combined filing would be tested. The new combined form would be filed with the State of Iowa, which would process the return, forward required data to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and thus meet some of the employers' Federal and state filing requirements.

#### 1.1 Purpose of the Iowa Project Performance Evaluation Plan

The purpose of the Iowa project Performance Evaluation Plan (PEP) is to determine how well the project is achieving its mission and goals in relation to the performance measures established in the project plan. The PEP includes the project standards: mission, goals, performance measures, and unquantifiable benefits. That information is used to determine the project evaluation process, data collection strategy, data analysis process, and project progress.

#### 1.2 Scope

The PEP covers the Iowa project from inception through transition. The PEP includes an interim status section where the project's status as of July 1, 1998, will be presented. This document also includes the standards used to measure project success and the evaluation process employed to determine project results.

## 2 - Standards

### 2.1 Mission

The Iowa project's mission is to reduce the tax and wage reporting burden on employers by facilitating the development of a process for Iowa to receive from employers electronic and paper filings of wage and withholding tax reports at a single location. Iowa would then extract the required state and Federal tax data and forward them to the appropriate agencies (e.g., Iowa Department of Revenue, Iowa Workforce Development, and the IRS).

### 2.2 Goals

The goals of the Iowa project are to:

- Satisfy employers by allowing them to meet both Federal and state quarterly employment tax filing requirements by filing one quarterly return with a single state agency,
- Allow a state agency to extract and transmit tax data to participating agencies,
- Eliminate excess filing costs, and
- Provide employers both an electronic and paper means to submit combined reports.

### 2.3 Performance Measures

To evaluate how well the Iowa project is meeting its mission and goals, the following performance measures were developed and implemented:

- Reduced filing burden to participating employers through single point filing;
- Federal and state cost savings from reduction in entry and processing time;
- Level of satisfaction of employers that file one quarterly return (either paper or electronically) with a single state agency to meet both Federal and state quarterly employment tax filing requirements; and
- An agency's successful extraction and transmission of tax data to participating agencies.

### 2.4 Unquantifiable Benefits

In addition to the goals of the Iowa project, there are unquantifiable benefits that should be taken into account:

- Improved customer service,
- Increased trust between the private sector and government (Federal/state),
- Federal partnership with states,
- Increased interagency cooperation,
- Intergovernmental data sharing
- Increased voluntary compliance due to less complexity in the tax laws,
- Immediate verification of employer tax data, and
- Changed culture toward initiative and empowerment.

These benefits will be realized over time and must be considered when determining the level of success of the project.

### 3 – Performance Evaluation Process

Performance evaluation of the Iowa project will be conducted in four steps:

1. Definition of baseline, target, and threshold values for each performance measure;
2. Identification of the data elements required to evaluate each measure;
3. Development of a data collection process; and
4. Collection and analysis of data.

Each step is outlined in detail in the following sections.

#### 3.1 Definition of Baseline, Target, and Threshold Values for Performance Measures

To effectively evaluate the performance of the Iowa project, it is necessary to first establish a baseline. A baseline should be thought of as a picture of the way things are now, frozen at a moment in time. That picture is then used for measuring changes to the project at points in the future. The 1997 fiscal year serves as the baseline for data collection efforts, as it precedes the demonstration of the Iowa project.

The target value for each performance measure represents the maximum return on investment (return on investment, or ROI, is a numerical answer to the question: “For every dollar invested in the project, how many dollars will be realized in benefits?”) or the highest value that can be expected from the project. The target values were taken from the *STAWRS Business Case Version 7*, dated December 4, 1997, or determined through analysis of STAWRS project documentation and discussions with subject matter experts.

The threshold value for each performance measure represents the minimum ROI or percentage of satisfaction that justifies the transition of the Iowa project to appropriate agencies. Threshold values are determined on the basis of alternative uses of available capital; for example, if alternative investments yield a 1.1:1 ROI, then STAWRS should show an ROI of 1.1:1 or greater. Table 3-1 captures the performance measures and their respective baseline, threshold, and target values.

Table 3-1 Values for Evaluating Performance

Performance Measure	Baseline Value	Threshold Value	Target Value
Employer tax and wage reporting burden reduction	Current annual employer burden	Employer ROI of 1.1:1	Employer ROI of 37.7:1
State government cost saving from processing efficiencies	Current annual state costs	State ROI 1.1:1	State ROI of 8:1

Performance Measure	Baseline Value	Threshold Value	Target Value
Federal government cost savings from processing efficiencies	Current annual Federal costs	Federal ROI of 1.1:1	Federal ROI of 16.7:1
Employer satisfaction and system acceptance	Current percentage of selected participants providing positive feedback	75% positive feedback from selected participants	90% positive feedback from selected participants
State agency successful extraction and transmission of data	Current percentage of files sent that are received by the IRS	95% of the files sent are received by the IRS	100% of the files sent are received by the IRS

### 3.2 Baseline Data Collection Process

Information for the baseline (fiscal year 1997) data elements , such as the number of returns, tax burden for the state, etc., can be obtained from existing records and reports. Gathering implementation cost and unquantifiable benefits data will require a more concentrated data collection effort. That data collection effort will include discussions with STAWRS officials, state representatives, and state agencies such as the Federation of Tax Administrators; technical and functional interchanges; and satisfaction surveys. The collection process will be carefully structured to capture baseline data from which to measure the project's success in realizing unquantifiable benefits.

### 3.3 Identification of Required Data Elements

For each performance measure, the data elements required to assess that measure must be identified, and the possible sources for collecting the data determined. Once this information has been obtained, a collection strategy can be developed. The data requirements that correspond to the performance measures for the Iowa project are shown in Table 3-2.



Table 3-2 Data Requirements

Performance Measure	Data Element	Data Source
Employer tax and wage reporting burden reduction	Hours required to complete returns (current)	Stakeholder data collection efforts
	Hours required to complete returns (during demonstration)	Stakeholder data collection efforts
	Cost to complete returns (current)	Stakeholder data collection efforts
	Cost to complete returns (during demonstration)	Stakeholder data collection efforts
	Employer cost to implement	Stakeholder data collection efforts
State cost savings from processing efficiencies	Total number of returns and return types	State tax records
	State processing costs per return (current)	State tax records
	State processing costs per return (during demonstration)	State tax records
	State cost to implement	STAWRS project data

Performance Measure	Data Element	Data Source
Federal cost savings from processing efficiencies	Total number of returns	IRS records
	Federal processing costs (current)	IRS records
	Federal processing costs (during demonstration)	IRS records
	Federal cost to implement	STAWRS project data
Employer satisfaction and system acceptance	Number of employers (by size of firm)	State/IRS records
	Number of employers participating	State/IRS records
	Percentage of employers satisfied	Stakeholder data collection efforts
State agency's extraction and transmission of data	Electronic version of transmitted data	State records
	Electronic receipt of transmitted data	Federal records

### 3.4 Collection and Analysis of Data

Data used to determine if target or threshold values were reached and unquantifiable benefits achieved will be collected during two calendar quarters as stated in the Iowa Electronic/Paper Filing Employer's Quarterly Returns Project Plan. This collection period was established to ensure that the data collected are statistically significant, accurately assess stakeholder satisfaction with and participation in the project, and provide a sufficient basis for determining the extent to which the goals have been met. Though the analysis of data to determine which unquantifiable benefits the project is realizing is a long term process and will continue after the project is transitioned to appropriate government agencies, initial measures will be taken during the evaluation process to provide a complete picture of the Iowa project.

Analysis of the data will compare actual results with expected results and will attempt to explain any variances. Variances may result from the project itself, from errors in the initial

projections, or from flaws in the data collection process. Corrections in the data collection process or in the projected target threshold values will be implemented wherever necessary. If the results of the analysis produce an ROI or percentage greater than 1.1:1 for any performance measure, then the corresponding goal is considered to be successfully met. However, a lesser ROI or percentage does not necessarily imply failure. Other factors such as unquantifiable benefits that result from the project may offset a lower-than-expected return. Unquantifiable benefits will be measured by using methods similar to the baseline data collection efforts, such as feedback from visits, technical and functional interchanges, and satisfaction surveys.

## ***Section IV ■ Future Plans – Conclusions & Recommendations***

### **Sustainability**

The project has been approved for statewide implementation. Ongoing costs will be absorbed by the departments. Should the IRS elect not to participate, funding in the range of \$50,000 - \$100,000 will be needed to make the software Iowa specific.

### **Expansion**

Options to expand the project will be explored. Expansion could include additional forms, additional agencies, addition of other states, and an internet filing option rather than the modem to modem which this project is testing.

Costs of any addition should be less than this project because the concept will be in place. Any costs would come from the agencies participating in the expansion roll out. Cost estimates cannot be made at this time because they will depend on the amount of resources needed by each agency to adapt to electronic filing.

A decision on nationwide implementation or replication will be made at the end of this project by the National STAWRS office. Because of the level of support and recognition this project has received to date, it is felt expanded implementation will be the recommendation.

### **Maintenance**

Maintenance and updating of the system will be accomplished through the agency operating budget. Software upgrades or changes to the internet site will be required manually based on tax law changes which are enacted each year.

### **Intergovernmental and Citizen Focus**

Because the project involves a fixed set of employer users and three government agencies, no problem obtaining regular feedback and suggestions for improvement can easily be obtained. A help desk will be established to provide assistance and obtain feedback from employers. The help desk design and implementation are part of the 1999 budget plan.

### **Public Awareness**

Public awareness will be accomplished through newsletters distributed to employers by the three agencies. Direct mail and use of associations will be made to encourage participation once we go statewide. The team will coordinate this effort with the three participating agencies.

## Evaluations

Once implemented, ongoing evaluations will be the responsibility of the three participating agencies. The national partner may use the resources of a private contractor to assist in national evaluation efforts, that will be reported to the White House and Congress.

## Recommendations

We recommend that the IOWAccess Advisory Council continue the project for the 1999 calendar year and allow any unused budget to be carried forward for additional funding needs. The project co-chairs have agreed to continue in that capacity if the council approves this recommendation.

## Action Steps and Timeline for 1999

Task Name	Start Date	Finish Date
ETA review and approve process	11/30/98	12/7/98
Write MOU/Cooperative agreement between IRS and Iowa	11/30/98	12/11/98
Contingency plans developed	12/7/98	12/11/98
Build help desk	12/14/98	12/18/98
Develop help desk policies/procedures	11/30/98	12/28/98
Update Emp-State Software	11/30/98	1/4/99
Update State-State Software	11/30/98	1/4/99
Update State-Fed Software	11/30/98	1/4/99
Develop pay voucher system for IWD (EFT)	11/30/98	1/4/99
MOU/Cooperative agreement checked by legal	12/14/98	1/5/99
Train help desk personnel	1/4/99	1/8/99
Test updated Emp-State Software	1/5/99	1/11/99
Test updated State-State Software	1/5/99	1/11/99
Test updated State-Fed Software	1/5/99	1/11/99
Quality Control check of software	1/12/99	1/12/99
MOU/Cooperative agreement signed by IRS	1/6/99	1/12/99
MOU/Cooperative agreement signed by Iowa	1/6/99	1/12/99
Make copies of software	1/12/99	1/13/99
Locate and recruit live file participants	11/30/98	2/3/99
Complete Iowa risk assessment	11/30/98	2/3/99
Evaluation form for participants developed	1/20/99	2/10/99
Update instructions for Emp-State Software	2/4/99	2/10/99
Distribute software to employers	2/11/99	2/18/99
Evaluation forms distributed to participants	2/11/99	2/18/99
Develop Iowa security plan to prevent unauthorized disclosure of data	11/30/98	2/25/99
Develop schedule for final Iowa accreditation	11/30/98	2/25/99
Interim security authority for Iowa to operate signed	2/26/99	2/26/99

Task Name	Start Date	Finish Date
Document Iowa hardware architecture	11/30/98	3/2/99
Document Iowa hardware functionality	11/30/98	3/2/99
Document Iowa hardware capacity	11/30/98	3/2/99
Participating employers register with state and IRS	2/19/99	3/15/99
Participating employers test system conductivity	3/16/99	3/31/99
Live file demonstrations	4/1/99	5/10/99
Attend help desk	1/11/99	5/12/99
Survey participants	4/1/99	5/13/99
Prepare Iowa demonstration report	5/14/99	6/3/99

## *Executive Summary*

The goals of Project 9 were met.

A combined paper and electronic single-point filing system was developed, software written and both paper and electronic options were tested by a small pilot group of Iowa employers.

Surveys and a focus group were completed early in the process to allow us to gain employer input into the project and ensure it was perceived as a value to them. Both resulted in positive feedback and helpful suggestions to make the effort effective. Feedback was also solicited during the software filing tests and a telephone survey was conducted with participants at the end of phase I testing.

The project leads have met with our federal partner to develop a plan and timeline for the next phase which will include live transmission of returns using the software developed during this project. The next phase will also develop and test an internet based application for return transmission. Remaining funds from Project 9 will be used to complete the development of this phase of the project.

The effort has received national recognition from employer groups, unemployment insurance officials, and from our national partners. It is a priority project for each of them.

The team recommends that the IOWAccess Advisory Council create a subcommittee to carry this project forward during the 1999 calendar year.

We wish to thank our team members, our national partners, the Steering Committee and SPPG for the combined effort that made this project a success.